



California Agricultural Commissioners and Sealers Association Praise Forethought of Legislators

Fresno, California, March 22, 2007 – Upon today's news of a positive find of Light Brown Apple Moth in Contra Costa and Alameda counties in California, the President of the California Agricultural Commissioners and Sealers Association, Jerry Prieto Jr., praised the foresight of federal legislators including Senators Dianne Feinstein and Barbara Boxer and Representatives Jim Costa and Dennis Cardoza for introducing legislation that will address such challenges.

"We are just fortunate to have legislators in the Congress that have such foresight on issues such as this, said Prieto." "In California alone, we have witnessed increases in the number of high risk pest finds since 2001. These pests end up costing local, state and national government billions of dollars each year. Hopefully, the legislation introduced will insure more proactive measures and provide ample resources for us to get the job done effectively and efficiently."

Senator Feinstein authored legislation that will return inspections of agricultural imports back to the USDA Animal Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS). During the post 9-11 creation of the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), functions including inspections of agricultural goods imported into the U.S. carried out by Customs and Border Officials were taken from APHIS and turned over to DHS. According to Prieto this legislative change is good, "DHS officials do an outstanding job in securing our country's border from harmful and destructive threats. However, when it comes to destructive agricultural pests and diseases that enter our country, agriculture experts need to be in charge."

The Brown Apple Moth is a native insect of [Australia](#). It has been introduced and now occurs in [New Caledonia](#), the [British Isles](#), [Hawaii](#), [Western Australia](#) and [New Zealand](#). The insect and their larvae attack numerous horticultural crops and nearly all types of fruit crops, ornamentals, vegetables, glasshouse crops, and occasionally young pine seedlings.

Congressman Jim Costa authored H.R. 667, the Early Pest Detection and Surveillance Improvement Act in January of this year. It currently has 45 co-sponsors from 13 states throughout the U.S. The legislation authorizes the USDA Secretary of Agriculture to enter into cooperative agreements with States to augment their efforts to conduct early pest detection and surveillance to prevent the establishment or spread of plant pests that endangers agriculture, the environment and the economy of the United States.

Congressman Dennis Cardoza and Adam Putnam introduced legislation yesterday dubbed, Eat Healthy America Act, containing provisions similar to Senator Feinstein's legislation that returns inspections of agricultural imports from DHS back to APHIS. Cardoza and Putnam also incorporated the provisions of Costa's language into their bill to strengthen early pest detection efforts that will help respective states battle pests such as the Brown Apple Moth.

According to Prieto, County Agricultural Commissioners in Contra Costa and Alameda Counties have already increased trapping activities for the pest in areas surrounding the initial detections. The increased trapping is being conducted in cooperation with California Department of Food and Agriculture. Prieto said, "If the Light Brown Apple Moth impacted all of California's host crops, the total loss of production and control cost could be as high as \$133 million."

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